

Partnership Works!

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CO-CHAIRS:

Anthony A. Williams, Mayor
Government of the
District of Columbia

Joslyn N. Williams, President
Metropolitan Washington
Council, AFL-CIO

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Office of Labor-Management Programs

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20004

John A. Koskinen
City Administrator



Greetings:

"Partnership Works!" is a catchy title for the District of Columbia Labor-Management Partnership Council (DCLMPC) newsletter. More importantly, it is a fundamental belief driving District management and labor's work to promote effective partnership in District government. I have committed to a goal of establishing 20 new Labor-Management partnerships for this fiscal year. Each Deputy Mayor and Agency Director's performance expectations include the promotion of labor management partnerships in their organizations and working to ensure an environment that supports their success.

As Management Co-chair of the DCLMPC, with Labor Co-Chair Joslyn Williams, it is my pleasure to note that the articles in this newsletter represent only a small portion of the partnership efforts in the District. It is a testimony to the efforts of labor and management staff at all levels, that despite the effort required and the occasional difficulties, labor-management partnership continues to grow within the District.

This will be a dynamic year for the DCLMPC, agency and work group partnerships, and the Office of Labor-Management Programs. We will continue to use labor-management partnership to promote quality service to District citizens and quality of work life for District employees. We encourage and support your actions to do the same.

Anthony A. Williams, Mayor
Management Co-Chair of the DCLMPC

WASA: A New Labor-Management Partnership Council

By Stephen Cook, *Labor Relations Manager*
and James Ivey, *President AFSCME, Local 2091*

On April 18, 1996, following a 30-day Congressional review period, the DC Council enacted DC Law 11-111, "The Water and Sewer Authority Establishment and Department of Public Works Reorganization Act of 1996" which created the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DCWASA), a semi-autonomous regional entity.

DCWASA has 1,100 employees, 820 of whom are represented by five labor union locals. These locals are AFGE Local 631, Barbara Milton, President, AFGE Local 872, Christopher Hawthorne, President,

AFGE Local 2553, David Peeler, President, ASFCME Local 2091, James Ivey President, and NAGE R3-06, Michelle Hunter, President.

Under the direction of Jerry N. Johnson, General Manager, and the union leadership, a successor agreement was recently negotiated, utilizing the principles of partnership and interest-based bargaining. As a result of this process, Mr. Johnson was invited by the Mayor to participate in the 2001 DCLMPC Symposium panel discussion about labor-management partnerships

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Office of Labor-Management Programs Bids Farewell to Staff

By Sondra G. Petty, OLMP Staff

The Office of Labor-Management Programs bids farewell to Laurette Piculin and Gale Oppenberg. Their detail ended on March 17th. Ms. Piculin and Ms. Oppenberg came to the OLMP in September 2001 from the Federal Mediation Board with 20 plus years of experience in working with partnerships, conflict mediation and facilitation. Their contributions included partnership training for District agencies as well as the refresher course with the collateral duty facilitators. The Office of Labor-Management Programs wishes them well in their new endeavors.

WASA: A New Labor-Management Partnership Council

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with Mr. James Ivey, and Mr. John A. Koskinen, City Administrator. Mr. Johnson agreed to establish a labor-management partnership at DCWASA after the completion of negotiations.

On March 26-27, 2002, the Office of Labor-Management Programs (OLMP) facilitated twelve hours of partnership training for twenty DCWASA employees. There were ten employees representing the five local unions, and ten management employees. The training centered around what labor-management partnerships are, the commitment both partners must make to respect and understand other points of view, and the commitment to accept new roles and responsibilities.

The DCWASA Partnership team identified as its first goal "to establish better communication by applying the principles learned through partnership training." A follow-up meeting was held on April 30, to discuss lessons learned.

Improving the Workplace Establishing a Labor-Management Partnership

By Alfreda Davis
Chief of Staff, Office of the City
Administrator

Establishing a labor-management partnership is one approach that can be used to improve the workplace. It is based on a willingness by both management and labor to recognize: (1) that workplace problems exist; (2) that combined efforts at problem solving can result in improvements; and (3) their commitment to provide the resources necessary, including time and energy, to effect change.

However, it must be cautioned that labor-management partnerships are not panaceas. They cannot and will not solve all problems. Some issues, such as grievances and other issues covered by the collective bargaining agreement, are not intended to be handled by labor-management partnerships.

On the other hand, hundreds of other topics can be successfully addressed by labor management partnerships. These include: improving communications; improving employee knowledge and skills; employee suggestion programs; work environment, safety and health issues; employee morale; job satisfaction; and productivity. Each initiative should move the labor-management partnership closer to its shared vision of the kind of workplace desired.

The impetus for establishing a labor-management partnership can originate from management, labor or both. However, once the need is identified, every effort must be made to ensure that representatives from both labor and management are involved at every step of the planning and decision-making process. Participation should be balanced in terms of equal numbers of management and labor representatives. Participation should also be representative—including individuals from every level of the organization.

Often organizations raise the question of how quickly they should move to establish "formal" labor-management partnerships. There is no set answer. Many organizations undertake projects involving labor-

management cooperation without ever formally establishing labor-management partnerships. In other situations, the labor-management partnership structure provides the needed impetus and focus to ensure that desired projects have the resources and visibility needed to ensure successful completion.

The formation of a labor-management partnership is just the first step. The desired end result of labor-management partnership is the realization of shared visions for an improved workplace. Each partnership must agree upon the initiatives it will pursue and have clear goals, objectives and measurable outcomes. These could include customer and/or employee satisfaction measures and improvement of the delivery of services. The partnership should agree on and document a methodology to measure these gains and benefits early in the life of each initiative so that it may monitor progress and be able to make credible and objective claims about the success or failure of any given initiative.

Once consensus is reached regarding the need to establish a formal labor-management partnership, a few simple ground rules should govern its operation.

Agreement should be reached on: the size and composition of the group; the selection process for membership; type of leadership; partnership decision-making process; code of conduct for members; meeting times, frequency, dates, locations and duration; and methods of communicating partnership work within the organization.

Labor-management cooperation is now the preferred way of accomplishing work in this government. In this improved climate of cooperation, and as increasing numbers of agencies form labor-management partnerships, significant and lasting improvements both in the quality of work life and in the delivery of government services are within our reach.

Partnering: DC Libraries Continue to Show the Way

By Ben Van Hoose, OLMP Staff

On April 11, 2002, staff from the Office of Labor-Management Programs (OLMP) attended the monthly partnership meeting of the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL). This type of visit is one of several ways that OLMP staff works to assist agency partnerships. Additionally, OLMP provides initial orientation meetings, assessments, training, and facilitation.

The DC Public Library's Partnership Council is one of the District's more "established" partnerships. The group was formed in July, 1998. It has 20 members (10 Labor and 10 Management), and meets monthly. The partnership is co-chaired by Library Director, Molly Raphael and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1808 President, Chuck Hicks.

The OLMP staff attended an animated and informative meeting. The Library's Partnership Council has several exciting projects in progress. Their "First Impressions 2002" campaign is a project

that involves workers volunteering to go to various sites around the city to clean and beautify (planting flowers and trees) libraries for citizens and their children. The Partnership Council also sponsors monthly and annual Employee Recognition programs to inspire and motivate the workforce.

The innovative project that is truly "outside of the box" is the Partnership's Paper Donation Initiative. After acquiring a substantial quantity of paper contributed by a paper manufacturer, the partnership distributes construction and other types of paper to DC schools in need. On the date of our visit, a letter from DC Public School students expressing their appreciation was shared with Partnership Council members.

The DCPL Partnership Council members have become real partners. As outside observers, it was impossible for OLMP staff to identify who was representing labor and who was representing management. The DCPL exemplifies an ideal partnership. *Way to go DCPL!*



The DC Public Library's Labor-Management Partnership Council co-chairs, Chuck Hicks and Molly Raphael receive an Outstanding Partnership Award from DCLMPC member David Schlein at the 4th Annual D.C. Labor-Management Partnership Council Symposium.

DC Labor-Management Partnership Council Holds Winter Retreat

By OLMP Staff

The DC Labor-Management Partnership Council held its first annual retreat on December 10, 2001. It was held at the Maritime Institute of Technology Training and Conference Center, Linthicum, Maryland. Clyde Horton and Darrell Harvey, from The George Washington University facilitated the day-long session. Twenty-four DCLMPC members participated in the retreat.

Key goals of the retreat included:

- Clarifying the direction and goals of the DCLMPC;
- Identifying concrete steps to overcome challenges and achieve goals;
- Establishing an ongoing approach for strategic planning for the DCLMPC; and
- Continuing to improve the functioning of the DCLMPC as a team.

The retreat was a hands-on working session that promoted team building among the council. The day was characterized by honest, energetic discussion of the members' differing views of the DCLMPC's mission, status, action, etc., and a consistent focus on how the Council could make a real impact on supporting and spreading the benefits of effective partnership throughout DC government. Ron Flowers (Administrator, Fleet Management Administration/DPW) noted "I felt a real sense of commitment on the part of the participants to make labor-management partnership a reality within the District government."

Key topics addressed during the day included:

- Each participant's views on the requirements of an effective partnership;
- The role/mission of the DCLMPC;
- Key near and long term goals of the DCLMPC; and

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DPW's Solid Waste Management Administration: Working Together

By Thomas Henderson, *Administrator*

During a two-day training workshop on February 12th and 13th representatives of the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Management Administration and Local 2091 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees studied the art of partnership.

This effort was made easier by several years of partnering on specific projects and the facilitators from the DC Office of Labor-Management Programs (OLMP) who facilitated the training.

On the first day, the group reviewed the basis of developing a good working partnership and then developed six issue areas where labor and management would seek to partner. The six areas are: 1) Attendance; 2) Tardiness; 3) Safety; 4) Workplace Violence; 5) Training and Communications; and 6) Suitable Work Sites.

To give each participant a practical experience in partnership development, Issue 5, "Training and Communications" was selected to be developed further. An issue statement was developed as a guide which read as follows: "How do we insure that all employees receive information on all available training in a timely fashion?"

The group then developed a list of nine interests and nine options to meet them. Options were then evaluated based on

whether they solved a problem, were practical and doable, and whether more information was needed. A union and management participant were then assigned to further explore each option and report back at the next meeting in March.

At the March meeting, each two-person option team reported on progress. For example, option one was getting a training bulletin board at each work location. A number of locations already had such boards but some did not. Of those with boards, the type and condition varied considerably. The group agreed to move ahead with placement of glass covered boards at those locations which did not already have them. Boards were purchased and installed at most locations by the groups' April meeting.

Work will continue on training options over the next few months but other issues identified during training will also be addressed by the partnership. In addition, the partnership will also be exploring the potential for the District taking back (in-house) the collection of recyclable materials which was contracted out in 1998. In May, a group from the partnership will travel to California to study several cities and counties which have implemented recycling programs similar to the one under consideration in the District.

DC Labor-Management Partnership Council Holds Winter Retreat

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- An honest discussion of the DCLMPC's key accomplishments and disappointments;

In addition, the participants divided into small groups and developed a near-term goal they viewed as a priority. The groups also identified suggestions for improving the internal functioning of the DCLMPC.

Substantial progress was made on each of the retreat goals. However, everything could not be completed in the one-day session and follow-up "homework" spilled over into the monthly council meetings through March. The outcome has been a newly energized Council with a clearer mission, a better understanding of the differences and commonalities of its members, and prioritized goals and objectives for the future.

Dave Schlein (AFGE 14th District, National Vice President) may have described the retreat best when he commented that he "appreciated the frank and open discussion between management and labor which is necessary to move the labor-management partnership initiative forward in the city. We laid the groundwork for important progress over the next 12 months."



Office of Labor-Management Programs

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC 20004